



ART: RICHARD Y.



SEPTEMBER 2011 ISSUE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Letters to B&P	2
Poetry & Art	3
Leadership Circle!	4
M-2-F Transsexual Issues in Prison	5 & 6
Request FREE BOOKS!	7
Request Erotica & Religious Support	8
Bo Brown and Prison Abolition	9
ALP on Marriage	10
Fun Page!	11
Addresses, Poem, Fun Answers!	12

Dear Friends,

The summer is coming to an end and the Autumn Equinox is nearly here. For those who connect to Earth-based spiritual traditions this is a time of harvest and a balance in the world as day and night are equal to each other. For Muslims this September is the return to daily routine after the month long fast of Ramadan. Jews honor the beginning of Rosh Hashanah on September 29th. As seasons transition there is much time for deeper reflection, to look inside ourselves and make plans for our beginning steps into the new season. The cycles of our lives offer opportunity for reflection and action.



Those of us doing work for Black and Pink on the outside are incredibly grateful for all the votes that came in for the Leadership Circle. Inside this month's issue you will find out who you all voted for to share the leadership of Black and Pink (page 4). This organization belongs to you and we are full of hope and anticipation as we begin to figure out what direction you all will take Black and Pink in over the years to come. Thank you for using your voices, and to those who were not chosen to be on the Leadership Circle, we are still very excited to work with you and see what options are available for Black and Pink chapters to spring up in prisons across the country. There is much organizing work to be done.

One of the questions we all need to be asking as Black and Pink is, what role can we play in the national movement towards abolishing the prison industrial complex? We need to hear from each of you what you think the priorities are for fighting against this system that causes so much pain. Here in Massachusetts, along with policy and movement building work, there is a need to shift the dominant conversation about punishment to the possibility of transformation. The chair of the Massachusetts Parole Board has consistently stated at Parole Board hearings that the prisoner before him has not been punished enough, even if that prisoner presents no threat to the community, and should be denied parole. This blatant disregard for the role of parole is dangerous in Massachusetts and is a pattern that is growing all around the country, and we need to respond.

How can Black and Pink model a new way of living together? One writer, James Logan, suggests that we need to "drive humanity toward 'the reunion of the separated.'" When an individual causes harm to another there is a need of return to the grace of humanity for all involved. Society as a whole has a particular role in this process along with the individuals directly involved in a particular situation. Society is, "in need of forgiveness of having created and permitted crime-generative communities to exist." This permission can be seen as the refusal to provide universal healthcare, criminalizing mental illness, evicting people from their homes, sending people off to war, and so on. The particular individuals involved in an instance of harm also have roles to play in the process of justice. James Logan defines restorative justice as a system that is, "community-based and deals with offenders through a victim-oriented process of restoration in the form of restitution... Restitution recognizes the basic need of victims for vindication without making the pain and humiliation of punishment the final word." We have the capacity to model this, to make mistakes when trying, and to try over and over again.

As the days get shorter and shorter let's use the beauty of the dark skies to inspire us with new visions and new ideas for the possibility of living rightly together. Share with us how you imagine this working, share with us how you make this happen even in the places you are locked up in. We keep this work going knowing that once there were no prisons, that day will come again.

In loving justice,
Jason

Fight the Fight

Black and Pink,

I got your March newsletter and I got angered by the article from Jonathan. Not at him, but at the so-called justice system of prisoners. I am completely in awe he got his letter out at all. I am a bi male doing life without parole. I am also 6'4 250 lbs. Here in California we are treated awful until you become violent. I go to chow twice a day and I see the corrupt pigs taunting and sexually harassing our GBT inmates. I have refrained from lashing out. I am a GBT advocate here and a DDP advocate. Those are the prisoners who are learning disabled. None of them can file complaints. So I am here for those inmates who CDC targets, abuses, and assaults. Whether it be verbally or physical. When we are targeted in the streets it's called a hate crime. 15 years to life. But in here it's a joke and permitted. All we can do is paper them to death, call your family, their one voice is equal to 1,000 of ours. Screw their policy and procedures. Write to the federal government Dept. of Justice in Washington, DC. Civil Rights Division. Special Litigation Service. Document everything. But most of all keep your head up high, your pride even higher. And remember we are all united, regardless of our race, or residence. Fight the Fight. My love all who read this.

Hugs and kisses,

Robert "Squeaks" M., March 2011

Doing Time

There is a popular country song called "Killing Time" that, if given the chance, I would rewrite the chorus and rename it "Doing Time." The new chorus would go something like this: "This doing time is doing me. Making myself sigh, thinking I won't see, the other side of that line before they bury me. Yeah, I might just find that I'm doing time for eternity."

The "line" that I am referring to is the fence (or walls as the case may be for some of us) that surrounds the prison. I realize and understand that some of you may be doing life in prison; however, eternity is forever and unending. You may be doing time for the rest of your earthly life, but when the LORD calls you home, you will truly be free for eternity. NOT A SINGLE one of us is doing time for eternity. Though it seems that way. I have been down for three years as of July 10. I know that is a short time compared to some of you, but some days it seems that I have been doing time for eternity. I am due to discharge sometime in early 2013 and that seems like it is an eternity away, but as I said a few sentences back, eternity is forever and unending. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, remember that no matter how long a sentence you may have, you will NOT be doing time for eternity. Also, remember two very important things. The most important thing to remember is that GOD LOVES YOU and SO DO I. And perhaps the second most important thing to remember is that once there were no prisons and that day will soon come again. Until next time, hold your heads up high and smile all the time. ☺

Peace and Love,

Andy ☺ , Iowa

Failing Grievances Process

In response to Ricky M.'s "Beyond Grievances," [July 2011 Newsletter] I too am feeling the stress due to the grievances process that seems to be failing in Texas prisons. I am very fortunate to have a family to support me and make phone calls to the correct places when no response is forthcoming for the grievances we write. Nine out of ten responses end with this reply: "No corrective action is warranted." Even with the follow up Step 2, the "Good Ol' Boy System" is just not working anymore.

Grievances are a great start and a must if you plan to pursue legal action. Not all of us on the inside are fortunate enough to have friends and family that will take the time to get involved and make phone calls or meet with unit officials to complain. But those of us that do have the means, we need to get them involved.

I applaud Black & Pink for what is happening to help everyone on the inside and in the world. The more involved everyone becomes, the more people will have to listen.

Sincerely,

Shawn M., Texas

"My Dream"

I dream of love,
 A smiling face,
 Of someone who will share my life.
 I dream of laughter,
 To steal away my pain,
 Of a lover to soothe all my fears.
 I dream of understanding,
 A strong caring heart,
 Of a person who won't judge my past.
 I dream of togetherness,
 The treasures of love,
 But please hurry, my soul's fading fast.
 I dream of unicorns,
 of fairies in moonlight,
 Of love in a look meant for me.
 I dream of a thing which I've never had.
 I dream of you setting me free.

-Donny W., Texas

"Strong Mind"

Frame of mind locked inside - Locked
 away without a view outside. - To pass
 the time I try to find a place to sleep to
 get a peace of mind. - Stuck in time with-
 out a clue to find a key to my freedom
 times. - So I cry because my pain inside
 from past thoughts of misery time. - So I
 decide to think of the sky. - I ponder on a
 bird so I can fly. - High above beyond
 space - When will my heart open my pre-
 cious gates. -

-Steve C. in PA

"My Scripture"

I'm young but worn down trying 2 be an optimist...
 Possibly this world doesn't realize the effects of it's existence.
 When I think I'm getting stronger, it's usually a facade...
 When I think I'm getting closer I find that I've been beguiled by mirages.
 My Heavenly Father bless me with the piece of peace I keep...
 Your ways are not mine so I honestly don't know what you may or may not have in store when it
 comes 2 feeding my growth.
 Carry me thru the sands of tyme adding on 2 the hope I tote...
 You know everything but there's some places in my mind that even I won't go.

2 Be Continued...

-Christopher 'Talib' S., Angola LA

"Risk"

To laugh is to Risk
 appearing a fool,
 To word is to Risk
 appearing sentimental,
 To reach out for another is to Risk
 expressing your true self,
 To place your ideas, your dreams before the crowd
 is to Risk their loss,
 To love is to Risk
 being loved in return,
 To live is to Risk
 dying,
 To hope is to Risk
 despair,
 To try is to Risk
 failure...

But Risk must be taken
 because the greatest hazard in life

Is to Risk

nothing,

The person who Risk

nothing,

Does nothing, has nothing

and is nothing,

They may avoid suffering and sorrow

but they simply cannot learn,

Feel, change, love, grow,

or live,

Chained by their certitude

you are a slave,

You have forfeited freedom...

Only a person who Risk
 is free.

-Louis R. in Corcoran, CA

Black & Pink Prisoner Leadership Circle!

The "free-world" Leadership Circle is ecstatic to introduce to you the 10 representatives YOU voted to represent you in the Black and Pink Leadership Circle. In total, 140 Black and Pink prisoner family members voted. The "free-world" Leadership Circle (LC) decided to abstain from voting. It was a very close race, and everyone who ran received at least 15 votes. We all thank everyone who ran, and know that many of you will get the opportunity to run again. In the meantime, we of course welcome your input and suggestions regarding how Black & Pink is run. While all "free-world" Leadership Circle candidates received at least 90 votes, we are sorry to announce that Winter will still be volunteering but cannot commit to the LC. In September, the "free world" LC will go on a planning retreat, and will include in our discussion how we can be inclusive of and accountable to the prisoner LC members' voices!

Your Leadership Circle members listed in alphabetical order:

Congratulations!

Angela Monique R.
Daryl H.
J.D.H. (Jamee Diedre)
Jennifer G
Kelly J.
Kevin F.
Pat T.
Paul F.S. - AKA Shaylanna
Ricky M.
Shawn "Harlequinne Mystique" B.

Celebrating NY Marriage See Page 10 for a related statement

Dear Black & Pink,

How are you guys & gals doing, it's Orphan here in Arizona. I just would like to write you and celebrate with you guys and the rest of all the LGBTQ communities all around the U.S. on New York's success of passing the new "same-sex" marriage law. I know this is going to help set standards for other smaller states to pass similar laws for "same-sex" marriages. I know if Sylvia Rivera was still with us (which she is in our hearts) she would have been on the front line of getting the bill passed. Many LGBTQ couples went out on the same day and got married and set a record in U.S. history and if this is not an accomplishment than all the happiness is!!

I hope this will encourage other LGBTQ communities to stay strong, take pride in who was and keep out voices strong!! The louder we are the more we will be heard! So keep up the resistance, we will achieve our goals which also includes "to always remember that once there were no prisons, and that day will come again." (A quote from Jason).

In Loving Struggle,
Orphan AKA Brandon, Arizona

Dear Black & Pink Family,

June 24, 2011, New York became the largest U.S. State to grant "legal" recognition of same-sex marriages as NY Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the Marriage Equality Act. Kudos to Cuomo! This is another winning historical moment for our GLBTQ community & and sign that the best is yet to come! Of course, two days later the annual Pride Parade was celebrated internationally and in Sao Paulo, Brazil there was an estimated 4 million in attendance!

N-E-way, to all of my GLBTQ sisters & brothers, we must continue to fight for our liberation, equality, and freedom. Hey, there's strength in numbers. If we continue fighting as a whole, tremendous things will happen to benefit us all. But we must fight in an intelligent, organized fashion in order to be heard and respected for who we are & what we represent! My love to all at Pelican Bay and in the Prison Industrial Complex period, as well as free world brothers and sisters!

Chaque chose en son temps- Everything in its own time!
Sheldon T., Texas

M-2-F Transsexual Issues in Prison



Definitions:

Alienation- The act of alienating or the condition of being alienated. People turning a cold shoulder to you because they see you as being a homosexual. Regardless of your explaining to them the differences between a homosexual and a transsexual. People avoiding you because of what others say. Example: Trying to be friends with someone and having others ask them, "What are you talking to that punk for?" Then having that person shun you because of peer pressure.

Emotional Isolation- Emotional: Of or relating to emotion. Isolation: The quality or condition of being isolated. Example: Having no one to share common experiences with. No friends or even trustworthy associates. Having no one to talk to that actually understands the emotions and/or difficulties you go through trying to deal with being a transsexual in prison.

Ridicule- Words or actions intended to evoke contemptuous laughter at or feelings towards a person or thing. Example: People say "Act like a man" or "Look at that thing there, it/he thinks he/it's a woman," knowing that these words or others like them are hurtful. People making comments and remarks that cause others to laugh at you.

Gibe- To make taunting, heckling, or jeering remarks. Example: When you walk down the hallway and officers or inmates or both call you by your make gender name out of spite in a sarcastic way. Or they say things like, "So you think you're a woman?" (Definitions taken from the American Heritage College Dictionary 3rd Edition)

When you are a transsexual you generally feel as if you do not belong. If you are a transsexual you feel alienated from both genders. The females do not accept you as being female and the males usually look at you as being a homosexual.

You long for acceptance for what and who you are *instead* of what others perceive you as. You get so tired of constantly explaining yourself; who and what you are, the differences between you and a homosexual. About why you do not act like a "man," why you feel that you are a female trapped in a man's body.

Sometimes you so long for a companion to share with (non-sexually) that you will let yourself be used and sometimes even mentally and physically abused just to feel needed and/or wanted. You know intellectually that the companionship/friendship is not genuine. But you are willing to deceive yourself emotionally just so you can have even the insincere companionship/friendship. You want to be accepted so badly at times that you are even willing to try and be what you are not.

At times you get so disgusted with how your body looks and feels that you are willing to do almost anything, go through almost anything, to change it. Even to the point of performing your own surgery to remove your male genitals, in spite of the pain caused by it and the real serious risk of life threatening infections or even death due to these infections or bleeding. Sometimes the physical pain seems worth it to get rid of the constant mental anguish and pain that seems at times to be more than just mental.

Being in a prison setting can and does increase these feelings a hundred fold. At times the inmates and staff can be so closed-minded. Even the mental health and medical staff that is supposed to know better. The continuous jibes, taunts, and ridicule are mind-boggling at times. And the more you want to get away from it the worse it seems to be.

I had a licensed psychologist that has over 20 years experience tell me that being transsexual is just a "lifestyle" choice, as if anyone would voluntarily choose to be a transsexual. That is like a person choosing to have cancer or a heart defect. No sane person would choose to be a transsexual.

You struggle daily to deal with all the negative comments and feelings that you are surrounded by all the time. And no matter what, you are at the mercy of the administration, so therefore cannot escape the feelings of anger, hopelessness, isolation, and emotional abuse.

The constant pressure to "be like" everyone else, the constant alienation is very draining emotionally and physically. You strive to find your own niche. To put some balance in your life. You have to be careful or you can fall prey to others in prison. This goes for everyone in prison, but especially for the transsexual.

Some inmates will see you as a "thing" to relieve their sexual desires with. Others will see you as a safe target to relieve their general frustrations on. Even the guards with sometimes use you as their whipping post. They also see you as someone that it is safe to mentally and sometimes physically abuse.

Some inmates will see someone that they can use to try and make themselves feel superior. Some as something to relieve their boredom with, a form of toy. The staff may even turn a blind eye to this if it does not involve physical violence or does not jeopardize their jobs. (*Continued on next page*)

Cont. M-2-F Transsexual Issues in Prison

You are sometimes desperate to find your own group. Someone you can relate to. To talk to. Someone or something, that can help you find a balance. To help you recharge your emotional batteries.

If you are nice and friendly you can be perceived as weak, or easy to use. Some will even say that you are being nice just to have sex with someone or to "get under" someone. (Get under is prison slang for trying to get close to someone so that you can use them for your own purposes.)

If you act "tough" some inmates and guards will see you as a challenge, or as a threat.

I have discovered that some inmates will feign an interest in you or a liking of you just to get something from you. Whether it is food, money, sex, or something else entirely. I have also discovered from others and from my own personal experience that you can often confuse someone's sexual interests as "liking" you as a person instead of just a sexual object. That wanting to have sex with you is caring for you or liking you.

The pitfalls that face a transsexual in prison are even more numerous than those faced by non-transsexuals. The challenges are more numerous too. It is a daily struggle to avoid the one, and overcome the other. Take the need for treatment. This is a big challenge. You may get what is called psychotherapy. You may not. You may be able to get hormone therapy. But in most cases you **MUST** be able to prove that you were receiving them prior to your incarceration and that they were prescribed by a licensed physician. Taking "black market" hormones such as birth control does not count no matter how long you may have taken them.

The courts have ruled repeatedly that the prison is required to give you some form of treatment. But, that you are **NOT** entitled to the treatment of your choice. If you can get the doctors that work in the prison or even free world doctors to prescribe you hormones then the prison **MAY** be required to give you this medically necessary treatment.

But in most cases you will only be able to get the psychotherapy. And in a lot of cases that is not enough. But while in prison there is little that you can do except file a grievance if you feel that you are not getting the necessary treatment. If the doctors say that you do not need treatment then there is not much that you can do. Just file the grievances. Follow them **ALL THE WAY THROUGH** to the final stage. If you do not do this then you may not be able to file a 1983 complaint in the courts.

Being able to do so little can and often does engender a sense of hopelessness. There are many things that a transsexual has to deal with. Some easy, some hard. All that you can do is try. What works for me may not work for you or may not be appropriate. The best thing to do is to educate yourself as best as you can. Write to advocacy groups. Talk to the mental health workers at your unit if you can. If they are not knowledgeable, they may at least be sympathetic. Educate them when you can. Educate your fellow inmates also if you can do this without causing tension. **DO NOT PUSH IT ON ANYONE!** But most importantly, endure. Do not give up.

If there is not a support group for transsexuals at your unit, see about starting one*. Mental health may be able to help you do this.

Be mindful of your actions and interactions with others. The staff and your fellow inmates are more apt to misconstrue your actions simply because you are a transsexual and therefore seen as different and suspect. Being a transsexual you will be under constant scrutiny. Not only by other inmates but by the staff as well. Watch yourself.

But most importantly believe in yourself. Don't give up. I have been in prison for almost seventeen (17) years. I have roughly twenty (20) months to go before my release date. I have been a transsexual for all my life. I am now 41 years old. I have been trying to get the department to give me treatment for over 4 years now. I did receive psychotherapy for about a year and a half, until my therapist quit. I do not expect to get anything more than the psychotherapy that I have already received but I am not giving up. I plan to file a 1983 suit soon.

Keep up the fight.
Anastasia, Arizona

*If you are interested in starting something up, send a note to the address below for helpful print-outs:
Black and Pink—Trans Resources, c/o Reed Miller, 200 Amory St, Jamaica Plain MA 02130

Request FREE BOOKS!



**MIDWEST
Pages to Prisoners
PROJECT**

Taylor from Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project wrote us this month asking that we share with the Black & Pink prisoner family that folks in the following 16 states can write them seeking donated books since they are interested in supporting LGBTQ people.

States Midwest Pages to Prisoners mails to:

Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

Books can be requested by prisoners incarcerated in these states by sending a letter to:

The Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project
c/o Boxcar Books and Community Center, 408 E. 6th St.
Bloomington, IN 47408

The letter should include your **name, DOC#, facility name, mailing address**, any **restrictions** on books being sent to their facility (for example: no hardcover books, invoice required, etc.), and the **kind of books that you would like**. Try to describe the subject of the book you're interested in, rather than the title or author, please. The more areas of interest that you send them, the more likely it is that they'll find good books that match what you're looking for. As far as their queer section goes, they have a range of different books: some fiction (general fiction and erotica), some poetry, bios, health, queer studies, gender studies, a lot of theory and sociology books. In general, their books are donated and spread a wide range of interests: fiction, sociology, race studies, gender studies, sex and sexuality studies, humor, comics, cooking travel, history, biographies and memoirs, politics, law, labor studies, etc! ***In another state? Check out this list below!***

Nationwide

PORTLAND BOOKS TO PRISONERS
P.O. Box 11222, Portland, OR 97211

BOOKS TO PRISONERS, c/o Groundwork Books,
0323 Student Center, La Jolla, CA 92037

DC BOOKS TO PRISONS,
P.O. Box 5243, Hyattsville, MD 20782
Only two books per request. Request by subject.

PRISON LIBRARY PROJECT,
915C W. Foothill Blvd, PMB-128, Claremont, CA 91711
Self-help, personal and spiritual growth, wellness, and metaphysical books. Free resource guide available.

Selected States

APPALACHIAN PRISON BOOK PROJECT,
P.O. Box 601, Morgantown, WV 26507
Sends free books to: KY, MD, OH, TN, VA, and WV only.

BOOK'EM, P.O. Box 71357, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Free books to all US states except MA, OR, and WI.
Focuses on educational and non-fiction books.

BOOKS TO PRISONERS, c/o Left Bank Books,
92 Pike St, Box A, Seattle, WA 98101
All states except CA. Request by subject. No religious or legal books.

BOOKS THRU BARS, c/o Autumn Leaves Bookstore,
115 The Commons – 2nd Floor, Ithaca, NY 14850
Serves: CT, DE, MA, ME, MD, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, and VT

BOOKS 2 PRISONERS, c/o Iron Rail Bookstore
1631 Elysian Fields, Ste 117, New Orleans, LA 70117
LA only.

INSIDE BOOKS PROJECT, c/o 12th Street Books,
827 W. 12th St, Austin, TX 78701
TX only. Request by subject only.

INTERNATIONALIST PRISON BOOK COLLECTIVE,
405 W. Franklin St, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
AL, MS, and some prisons in NC only.

LOUISIANA BOOKS 2 PRISONERS
1361 Elysian Fields #117 New Orleans, LA 70117
Nationwide (except CA & TX), Southeast is priority.

NYC BOOKS THROUGH BARS, c/o Bluestockings Bookstore,
172 Allen St, New York, NY 10002
Nationwide, except MI. Specializes in political and history. Also literary fiction and other educational books. No religion books.

PRISON LITERATURE PROJECT,
c/o Bound Together Bookstore,
1369 Haight St, San Francisco, CA 94117
No OR or TX requests. Request by subject.

WISCONSIN BOOKS TO PRISONERS,
c/o Rainbow Bookstore,
426 W. Gilman St, Madison, WI 53703
WI and GLBT prisoners nationwide!



Request EROTICA



We are aware that many folks who are locked up have no access or limited access to any kind of sexual or erotic connection. As human beings we need this connection to our bodies and to our sensual selves. Our bodies regularly crave sexual sensation. We at Black and Pink want to make that available as best as we can. To do so we will make a written erotic story from Nifty Erotic Stories Archive available every month, separate from the newsletter, in different categories (see below) by request. We will not be sending images as the rules about sexual pictures vary too much from prison to prison.

We also recognize that many folks on the inside are looking for pen pals on the outside to write erotic/sexual letters with. While there certainly are some people on the outside who will want to write letters like that, the majority of people do not. We hope that having access to erotica will help meet the needs of folks on the inside without making anyone uncomfortable in their pen pal friendships.

We hope that this sexy writing is fun and feels good. If you are interested in receiving erotica please send us letters addressed to **Black and Pink – EROTICA**. Inside your letter please specify which category you would like. As a reminder “cisgender” refers to people whose gender matches up with their sex at birth; most people are “cismen” or “cismen”. “Transgender” refers to people whose gender is different than their sex at birth. Erotica Categories to choose from:

1. Gay Men (Cismen), 2. Lesbian (Cismen), 3. Bisexual (Cismen & Cismen), or 4. Transgender women
Happy reading!

Request Religious Support!



Too many prisons give right-wing or conservative religious leaders open access to prisoners. These preachers, Rabbis, Imams, and others bring with them toxic religious ideas that can harm LGBTQ people's spirituality. They might teach hate or intolerance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or transgender people. They might suggest that same-sex desire is sinful or that being gender non-conforming is against God. They might quote the Bible or Qur'an to justify themselves. They might teach this hate openly and cause you to feel bad about yourself. This is often called spiritual or religious abuse.

Every religion has lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people within it who have found a place for themselves in the tradition. We are making two page sheets available for people who want them about how they can find a place for themselves within a religious tradition.

YOU ARE NOT SINFUL BECAUSE OF YOUR SAME-SEX DESIRES OR GENDER IDENTITY!

We are happy to make resources available for folks who are looking to find themselves loved by their religious tradition. We are also happy to make resources available to atheists about how humanism provides a loving home for LGBTQ people. If you are a person of faith or a devout atheist, we want you to know that you can be both GLBTQ and whatever faith you are as well.

Please send requests for these resources to **Black and Pink – RELIGION** and put in your letter what category you are looking for (from below, or another if not listed!). Blessings to you in your spiritual discovery. Religious categories to choose from:

Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Paganism, Atheism/Humanism, Hinduism, Unitarian Universalism

Fire & Smoke: Bo Brown and Prison Abolition, Part 1 of 5

By James Clark, May 16, 2007, InfoShop News

On June 1, 1975, a bomb ripped through the office of the deputy director of Corrections at the Washington State Department of Corrections in Olympia. The communiqué for the bombing publicly announced the existence of the George Jackson Brigade. It also demanded reforms in Washington prisons, demands that had sparked an uprising at Walla Walla prison six months earlier.(1) Through Brigade member Rita "Bo" Brown, women's prison abolition and revolutionary struggle emerges in a larger trend of American abolitionism that began with the anti-slavery movement and continues today.

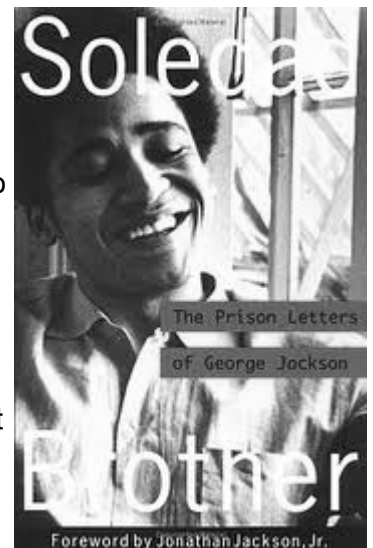
Bo Brown grew up in a small town in southern Oregon with her white working class parents and brother.(2) For Brown, high school was her introduction to the "ugliness of class." She was placed in the accelerated classes that contained mostly the what she called the "rich kids who had the benefit of better encyclopedias."(3) Schooling is often the agent for building children's awareness because it is their first contact with people from other communities. In her autobiography, *Lakota Woman*, indigenous rights activist and member of the American Indian Movement, Mary Crow Dog recounts a similar awakening during her time at boarding school. The historical colonial relationship between those who attended the school and those who ran it exposed her to the hierarchy of class and race.(4) While the stratification and repression of the school environment was an early influence on Brown, the same factors were intensified in prison.

After graduating from college in Salem, Oregon, Brown moved to Seattle in 1968 and discovered the gay bar scene(5) in a time when police harassment and brutality against the queer community was prevalent.(6) While working at the United States Postal Service in 1971, Brown was arrested for stealing from her employer and given a one year sentence at Terminal Island Federal Prison in California. During this first stint in prison, Brown's political consciousness began to develop. Prison provided her with a real world education about racism and police abuse, as well as more homophobia and queer bashing.(7) One event that was of particular significance was the murder of George Jackson in the summer of 1971. Jackson was a prisoner in California's San Quentin prison, an experience which, like Brown's, tuned him in to the injustices of American society. He had become a figurehead for both the Black Liberation and prison abolition movements, and his

book of letters, *Soledad Brother*, was a best

seller. In August of that year, while Bo Brown was reading *Soledad Brother* at Terminal Island, guards at San Quentin

shot Jackson dead during an alleged escape attempt. Only weeks later, in response to Jackson's killing and the conditions of incarceration, Attica prison in upstate New York erupted in a four-day prisoner uprising. The **Attica uprising (left)** brought widespread media attention to the anti-prison movement, which Jackson attributed to the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s.(8) For Brown, it crystallized the injustice of the prison system and steeled her will for a lifetime of struggling to dismantle that system.



Notes

(1) *The Power of the People is the Force of Life: Political Statement of the George Jackson Brigade*. (Montreal: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002) 33-44.

(2) Rita Brown, "A Short Autobiography," George Jackson Information Project. <http://www.gjbip.org/>

(3) Rita "Bo" Brown, Telephone interview. April 8, 2007.

(4) Mary Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*. (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990) ch 3.

(5) Rita Brown "Autobiography".

(6) "Stonewalled: Police abuse and misconduct against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the U.S." Amnesty International <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR511222005>

(7) Rita Brown "Autobiography".

(8) George Jackson, "An Interview with George Jackson" in James, Joy, ed. *The New Abolitionists: (Neo)Slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005) 229.

Audre Lorde Project Position Statement on Marriage

September 14, 2000



As an organization run by and for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two Spirit & Transgender (LGBTST) People of Color communities, The Audre Lorde Project (ALP) unequivocally supports the right of LGBTST individuals to access civil marriage. This statement is intended to briefly articulate some of the underpinnings of our position. It is not meant to be a comprehensive document, as much of the existing literature on the topic generated by members of LGBTST communities explain aspects of contemporary debates on the subject well. Rather, this statement is intended to articulate some of the aspects of ALP's position on the subject that are not currently discussed as broadly.

While there are those who argue that civil marriage should be a right reserved exclusively for heterosexual couples, we believe that much of the foundation for this type of logic is rooted in homophobia, heterosexism and a fundamental denial of basic human rights and self-determination for LGBTST communities. Various issues, including the following, inform our support for the right to civil marriage for our communities:

While there are those who argue that civil marriage should be a right reserved exclusively for heterosexual couples, we believe that much of the foundation for this type of logic is rooted in homophobia, heterosexism and a fundamental denial of basic human rights and self-determination for LGBTST communities. Various issues, including the following, inform our support for the right to civil marriage for our communities:

- **Freedom to create and nurture families and communities are issues of choice and self-determination.**

Communities of color and others in the United States have long had a history of building support networks, families and communities that differ from dominant society's portrayal of family as a simple nuclear unit. Extended families, and many other types of family units, have long been a tradition and source of strength against oppression within our communities. Same-gender couples and couples composed of gender variant individuals are part of this history of resistance, and should enjoy the same right to choose to marry, build families, and raise children as mainstream heterosexual couples. We believe that this also includes the responsibility of those who choose to be part of families (regardless of marital status) to build and nurture relationships based on principles of equality, and for the responsibility of our broader communities to respect and support those relationships.

- **Religious justifications against universalizing the right to marriage do not address the central demand for the right to civil marriage.** In addition, communities of color have various faith, spiritual and religious practices – many of which are never cited in mainstream discussions about religion and the right to marriage.

- **Fundamentally, restricting access to civil marriage to mainstream heterosexual couples is discriminatory.** Those within our communities who are unable to access civil marriage are denied over 1,000 legal, economic and other basic protections that mainstream heterosexual couples enjoy.

As a result, The Audre Lorde Project supports the right of those who choose to enter into a civil marriage to do so. Related to this, we also believe that:

- **Individuals within our communities should have the right to live their lives and build families that do not mirror nuclear family structures.** This includes upholding the right of those who do not choose civil marriage and/or do not choose monogamy as a life choice, to build families, and raise children. In addition, we believe that the choice of individuals to remain single is a choice as valid as choosing to enter into a life-long partner relationship, particularly given the many varied reasons that individuals may choose not to enter into marriages.

- **As the LGBTST movement moves forward in ending discrimination inherent in the current civil marriage system, we should continue our dedication to struggle against all forms of discrimination and oppression.** This includes recognizing and respectfully reacting to contradictions that sometimes arise through efforts that may be well-intentioned but place us at odds with the struggles of our allies – For example, when the struggle for marriage in Hawai'i was underway, some within the tourism industry (including gay-owned businesses) chose to capitalize on the circumstances by encouraging lesbian and gay couples to plan trips to Hawai'i to get married. This was in spite of the fact that many within the indigenous Hawai'ian sovereignty movement -- who had supported same-gender marriage -- consider tourism to be one of the most destructive forces impacting Native Hawai'ians and their struggle for sovereignty.

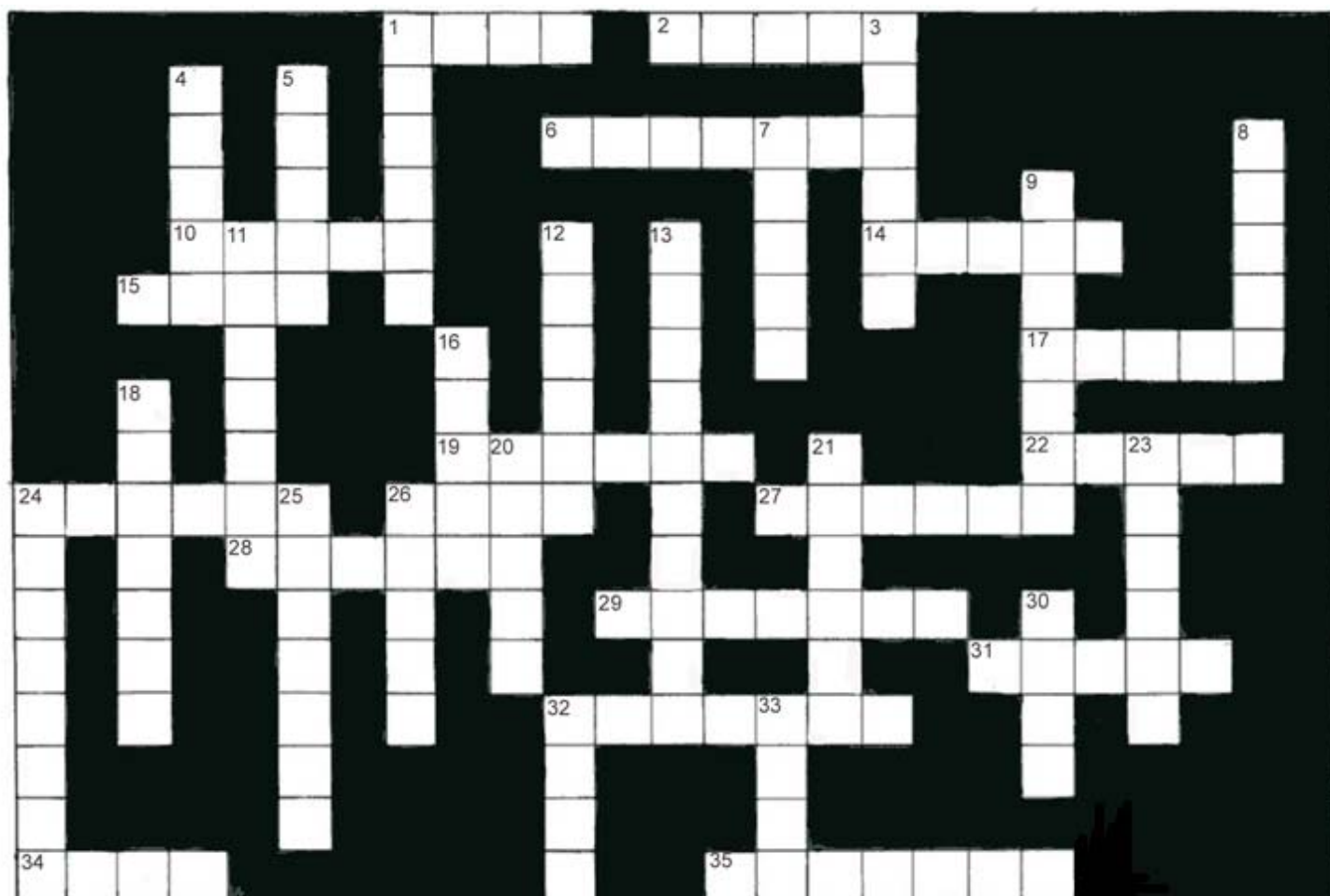
- **Ultimately, our struggles as LGBTST people should explicitly include economic justice for all peoples.** Many of the distinct economic privileges that many married couples enjoy under the current civil marriage system in the US (e.g. access to health-care programs through workplaces) are benefits that we should demand as rights for all, regardless of marital status.

We, at The Audre Lorde Project believe that recognizing the right to marry for individuals within LGBTST communities is a step towards ending discrimination and promoting equality for all.

Editors Note: While not all Black & Pink members agree with all points in this position, ALP is a wonderful organization, and this is a useful position to refer to when reflecting on the legalization of same-sex marriage in New York State.

The Rick Chris Gay Crossword Puzzle!

PAGE 11



Across

1. He was gay and TV's Perry Mason.
2. Movie: Two gay kids who are neighbors fall in love with a Mama Cass soundtrack in the background. "A Beautiful (blank)."
6. Movie starring Steven Weber, Patrick Stewart, Michael T. Weiss, Bryan Batt, Sigourney Weaver, Kathy Najimy, Nathan Lane and Olympia Dukakis.
10. She was Debbie on "Queer As Folk".
14. Financial guru as seen on PBS-TV.
15. Hirsute gay guy.
17. Owner, curator of Queer Music Heritage online music museum.
19. Wrote "Normal Heart" about the AIDS crisis in New York City from 1981 to 1984.
22. Was Mr. Humphries on "Are You Being Served".
24. The Scissor Sisters' member, also writer of "Tales Of The City Musical".
26. Long before Lady Gaga released "Born This Way", he recorded "I Was Born This Way".
27. Rick Chris's gay detective character Lynn Gordon (blank).
28. This comic's repertoire of characters includes Ernestine, Edith Ann, the Tasteful Lady, Susie the Sorority Girl, Tommy Velour, and Pervis Hawkins.
29. Color of the gay flag.
31. Represents the 2nd Congressional district in Colorado.
32. 2009 movie: The Big Gay (blank).
34. Village People song.
35. Comic and comedy writer for performers such as Bette Midler.

Down

1. She was Marcie on TV's "Married With Children".
3. Diva with many disco anthems. She wanted to party, she survived and can't say goodbye.
4. Played Emmett Honeycutt on "Queer As Folk".
5. Handsome gay singer, sings "End Of The World".
7. Wrote "Celluloid Closet" about homosexuality in the movies.
8. Priest who was gay, known as "Saint of 9/11".
9. Represents the 2nd Congressional district in Wisconsin.
11. Gay singer/songwriter from American Idol season 8 who finished as runner-up.
12. Star of LOGO-TV's "Sordid Lives".
13. Movie: Mormon missionary boy meets West Hollywood party boy.
16. Starfeet officer Hikaru Sulu.
18. Movie from 2007: Gay writer falls in love with gay artist/surfer.
20. The name of fictional gay detective character Beef Matson's assistant.
21. Early symbol of gay movement, character from Greek alphabet.
23. Wrote "Tales Of The City".
24. Fictional gay detective in a series of novels whose exploits were dramatized in a number of Here! TV teleplays.
25. Star of "Santa Claus Is Coming Out".
26. Wrote the screenplay for the movie "Milk".
30. Queer As (blank).
32. Mayor Of Castro Street.
33. Vigorous campaigner for gay rights and enemy of DADT.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12!

Crossword Answers!